



Official Journal of the Maritime Administration Volume 5, Issue 11

Logistics management system helps team find, retrieve vital information

— Story and photo by Erhard Koehler, N.S. Savannah programs manager —

The old expression about finding a needle in a haystack comes to mind for anyone trying to find technical information on the Nuclear Ship *Savannah*.

The *Savannah* is extremely well documented. MARAD has logbooks and notebooks, plans and drawings numbering in the thousands, technical manuals of every description, and project files going back to the days before President Eisenhower's dramatic 1955 "Atoms for Peace" speech to the United Nations.

Finding the right piece of information in this mountain of paper has been the hard part for the *Savannah* technical staff.

Files and related documents are stored in several geographically-diverse places including the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy library, at the Records Center in Suitland, (Md.) at the National Archives, onboard the ship itself, and, of course, at MARAD's Washington (D.C.) headquarters in Room 2119, which contains the collected files, folders and materials from 40 years of *Savannah* project managers.

Added to this "avalanche" of documents are collections of reference materials and records from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's public docket for the *Savannah*.

When MARAD's current decommissioning work began, the first major challenge for the project team was to sift, collate and arrange this huge quantity of material into a useable form.

This formidable administrative task was accomplished with help from within MARAD's Ship Operations team. The Division of Logistics Support is most often considered the knowledge warehouse to locate spare parts for repairs, yet there is much more to the logistics management system than just keeping track of equipment inventory.

With the cooperation of the James River Reserve Fleet, a logistics team "tackled" the *Savannah*'s technical library for the first phase of a document inventory effort that, when completed, will exceed 250 legal-sized file drawers of materials.



Bobby Young, an employee of government contractor ProLog, Inc., refers to his checklist of stacked boxes in the NS *Savannah*'s No. 5 hold during this past summer's cataloging project of the ship's historical documents.

From the ship's onboard drawers and compartments came nearly 4,000 drawings, blueprints and mylars of conventional and nuclear systems, shipyard and vendor drawings and other materials, all of which needed to be catalogued, scanned and bar-coded. Well over 400 technical manuals joined the document exodus to a Chesapeake warehouse for scanning.

A logistics team from MAR-614's contractor spent several cold months down in the ship's No. 5 hold, where more than 125 legal file drawer equivalents of documents were assessed and inventoried. A box-and-folder inventory was created that rendered the *Savannah*'s 1970-style file index into a more contemporary and useable data collection that now permits the project staff to find the information needed, when it's needed.

MARAD's extensive *Savannah* files are now neatly housed, logically numbered and much more accessible than ever before, and a whole lot of overstuffed cardboard boxes have been transformed into an effective information resource, thanks to the efforts of MARAD personnel working together to find solutions.